2: Villiers T-5 (1938-39) 1948 MK2 Maritime Arabs MK2
Kuwait MI1

Negro origin, the descendants of slaves, though not now slaves themselves. Many others are of Iranian origin. Almost none are Bedouin, for the Arab Bedouin is not a seafaring man. In Kuwait, the callings open to the low-class Iranian are restricted to portering, pearling (either as diver or as tender), and sailing. Both Iranians and Negroes work splendidly, are loyal, competent, and well disciplined.

As the *nakhoda* class is tied to the merchant by a structure of debt, so also are the sailors tied to the *nakhoda* class in the same way. All deep-sea sailing is paid for on a shares system, and there are no wages. Often the *nakhoda* of the deep-sea dhow has an interest in a pearling vessel (though not now to anything like the same extent as in former years), and the sailor may be bound to him through pearling debts, either his own or inherited. The more iniquitous practices in the pearling business structure have long been on the way out, largely because of the excellent example set at Bahrein, but the debt tradition stands and is almost impossible to eradicate.

The sailors go to sea because they know no other life, and they make a wretched living by incredibly difficult methods. They have no possessions other than the clothes they stand in, and one or two spare gowns, a good headcloth, and a few sarongs. Their toothbrush is the twig of a tree; their ablutions are made five times daily at a mosque well, or in the sea; they know no shelter and rarely have a bed. The younger seamen, I have noticed, often have no home other than the *suq*, or native bazaar, where they coil down in their rough cloaks for a night's sleep on a bench in a cheap coffee shop, or in the sand. At sea, they stretch out on the deck, beneath the stars, for there is no such thing as accommodation for the seamen or anyone else in most dhows. The officers and the more important merchants live on a bench round the wheel, in the stern of the ship; the seamen lie down anywhere.

What keeps the seaman a disciplined and more or less contented worker is his hope of reward, principally from smuggling or his own ventures, and his ambition to get hold of a tiny shop in the *suq* of his home town. This is an ambition he rarely achieves. His more usual fate is to die young, especially if he be also a pearl diver.

721 Parts of this coast are as dangerous for Europeans as for Arabs, and in
619 some instances more so for Europeans. Even as late as December 1949 on the supposedly peaceful coast of the Aden Protectorate an act of violence occurred against a British-owned yacht. I talked to the survivors several months later in Mukalla. They related how the 110-foot motor launch *Anne Loretta* with an Englishman, his wife, and one Arab crewman was cruising a little off shore when she touched a sand bar. The captain went ashore to lay out a stern anchor and was seized by the Arabs of the local Ardiab tribe on the coast; then his wife and the Arab went ashore to see what had happened and were likewise seized. Several British officials to whom I talked admitted that these two English people came very close to death in the hands of these unpacified coastal inhabitants. The British explanation was that the area was between the Eastern and Western Aden Protectorates where the tribes had not been pacified, and the yacht should never have landed there.

IV

505 Every Arab dhow of ocean-going tonnage has a captain *(nakhoda)*, a mate, three quartermasters (or helmsmen), a boatswain, and perhaps a boatswain's mate in addition to the crew. The total complement on a 100-ton ship may be from twenty to twenty-five men, while on a 200-ton ship there will be from thirty-five to forty men. The small coasters of up to 50 tons have crews up to eight or ten; there are no officials on these [291] small craft outside of the *nakhoda*. There is no formal dress on a dhow; often it is difficult to tell the *nakhoda* from the crew, as everyone usually wears simply a loin cloth or the long Arab gown and a head cloth.

A *nakhoda* is much more than the word 'captain' implies; he acts as navigator, pilot, shipwright, sailmaker, ropemaker, agent for buying and selling cargo, agent for freight, agent for recruiting passengers, cashier, bookkeeper, judge, and arbitrator. So completely does the *nakhoda* handle the ship and the ship's affairs that the mate has little to do when the *nakhoda* is aboard. Only when the *nakhoda* leaves the ship does the mate take over; that is the mate's only excuse for existence.

505 Many of the Kuwait ships on the run to Africa carry carpenters aboard
396 —not as ship's carpenters, but for the construction of small dhows for sale in African waters. Presumably they can sell them profitably in Africa at a price cheaper than the local boatbuilders! However, a small 10-ton dhow that was built aboard the Kuwait *bhum* on which Villiers sailed down the African coast, had to be left on the beach at Zanzibar in charge of a ship's agent, because the dhow could not be sold at the price de-